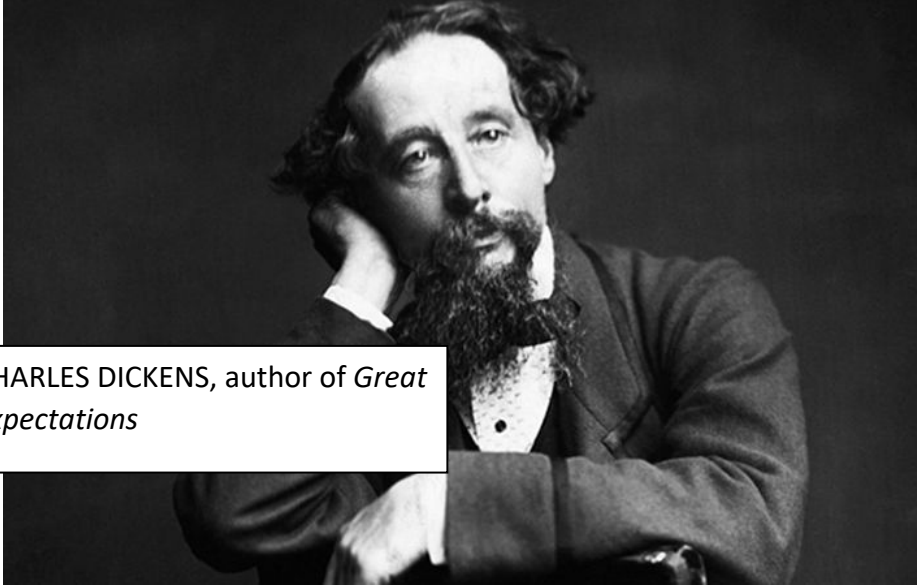
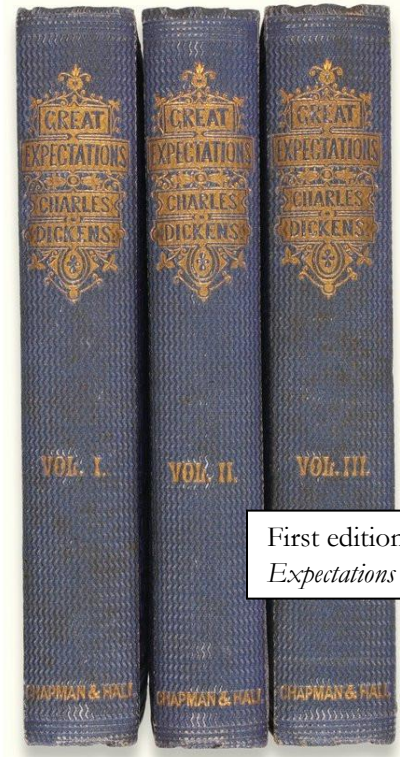


THE GENRES OF GREAT EXPECTATIONS



CHARLES DICKENS, author of *Great Expectations*

- *Great Expectations* published 1860 – 1861 in weekly installments in Dickens' magazine, *All the Year Round*
- After periodical run, *Great Expectations* published by Chapman and Hill as a three-volume novel in 1861
- Novel extremely popular



First edition of *Great Expectations*

- Can be classed as *bildungsroman*
- “*Bildungsroman* and *Erziehungsroman* are German terms signifying “novel of formation” or “novel of education.” The subject of these novels is the development of the protagonist’s mind and character in the passage from childhood through varied experiences—and often through a spiritual crisis—into maturity; this process usually involves recognition of one’s identity and role in the world. The mode began in Germany with K. P. Moritz’s *Anton Reiser* (1785–90) and Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* (1795–96)” [225]. Abrams, M.H. and Geoffrey Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms* Kindle Ed. Wadsworth, 2013.
- Developmental narrative signaled in the name of the protagonist, Pip, which means “Any of the (esp. small and hard) seeds of various fleshy fruits, as the apple, orange, grape, etc.”
- Novel begins with the question of origins and how much we are determined by them
- Pip’s father and mother are dead...As an orphan, how much is he bound by his family origins?
- How much can he direct his own fortune and future? He calls himself Pip, a corruption of his true name Phillip Pirrip, and grows to be recognized by that name. Can he reinvent himself?
- How much is he determined by the environment he is living in? What can you say about the settings that Dickens evokes in the first chapters of the novel? How do they inform us about Pip’s character?

- If the novel is about education, what counts as education? What does Pip have to learn and who from?
- Pip has great expectations and is training to be a gentleman. What is a gentleman, according to the text? Are there competing definitions of gentility?



Gillian Anderson as Miss Havisham

She was dressed in rich materials — satins, and lace, and silks — all of white. Her shoes were white. And she had a long white veil dependent from her hair, and she had bridal flowers in her hair, but her hair was white...But, I saw that everything within my view which ought to be white, had been white long ago, and had lost its luster, and was faded and yellow. [...] I saw that the dress had been put upon the rounded figure of a young woman, and that the figure upon which it now hung loose, had shrunk to skin and bone. Once, I had been taken to see some ghastly wax-work at the Fair, representing I know not what impossible personage lying in state. Once, I had been taken to one of our old marsh churches to see a skeleton in the ashes of a rich dress, that had been dug out of a vault under the church pavement. Now wax-work and skeleton seemed to have dark eyes that moved and looked at me. I should have cried out, if I could.

- Tripartite structure of the novel has been argued to cover three parts of life: boyhood, youth and maturity/manhood. Does this seem to be true?

- Can also be classed as a **gothic** narrative

- In gothic, what appears to be realist narrative is interrupted by horrific supernatural elements, hauntings, monsters

- Protagonists often seem to be struggling

against entrapment, restraint, domination...Actions staged in carceral spaces, either real or symbolic

- Supernatural elements are often present to evoke extremes of psychological states or complex symbolisms

- What aspects of the text seem to be Gothic and what is the function of those gothic elements?

- Can also be classed as **novel of crime, mystery**

- Populated by figures from the criminal underworld: escaped convict Abel Magwitch, swindler Compeyson, murderess Molly Magwitch. Pip filled with guilt and shame over his own criminality. Many settings are carceral, judiciary or evoke such settings.

- Reader must puzzle out several mysteries such as how Miss Havisham and her jilting are related to the criminal narratives of Magwitch, Compeyson etc.